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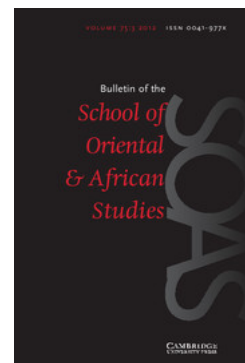
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**KENNETH ALLIN LUTHER (tr.), C. EDMUND BOSWORTH (ed.): The history of the Seljuq Turks: from the Jami al-Tawarikh, an Ilkhanid adaptation of the Saljuq-nama of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri. xiv, 189 pp. Richmond: Curzon, 2001. £45.**

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of date in their scholarly apparatus. Although the book's intellectual impact would have been greater if it had appeared in print in the mid-1990s, this still does not detract from the deeply personal research and ideas of its contributors. In short, the volume is essential reading.

DAVID ROXBURGH

KENNETH ALLIN LUTHER (tr.), C. EDMUND BOSWORTH (ed.):

*The history of the Seljuq Turks: from the Jāmī' al-Tawārīkh, an Ilkhanid adaptation of the Saljūq-nāma of Ṣahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī.* xiv, 189 pp. Richmond: Curzon, 2001. £45.

Wheeler Thackston's translation of volume one of the *Jāmī' al-Tawārīkh* having appeared in 1998 and 1999, the major work of Rashīd al-Dīn is now accessible to an English-reading audience. The second volume of the *Jāmī' al-Tawārīkh* is concerned with the histories of earlier rulers of Iran and the remaining peoples and dynasties of the known world. A French translation of the section on the History of the Franks (tr. Karl Jahn, Leiden, 1951) and an English paraphrase of the section on the History of India (The Hague, 1965) have appeared, and it is a credit to Curzon Press' *Studies in the History of Iran and Turkey* series that they have now brought out a translation of Rashīd al-Dīn's *History of the Seljuqs*. This very welcome translation should encourage interest in the other, if possibly less important, works of the statesman and historian, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh Hamadānī.

It is generally accepted that Rashīd al-Dīn and his team here owe much to the *Saljūq-nāma* of Ṣahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. Divergent views have been expressed about the true nature of this work and the editor of the work under review, C. E. Bosworth, explains the main theories relating to the question of the *Saljūq-nāma*. There has also been uncertainty over the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn's compilers preserved the originals and used other sources. Work leading towards a critical edition of Nīshāpūrī's original text, extant as the Royal Asiatic Society's MS Persian 22b, is currently being undertaken by A. H. Morton, according to whom a substantial part of the *Jāmī' al-Tawārīkh* text is derived from other and even Arabic sources. K. A. Luther (d. 1996) who completed his translation of Ahmed Ateş's edition (Ankara, 1960) in 1971 was aware of the problems surrounding the authorship of the text but he did not address them in a wholly satisfactory manner in his introduction, a criticism which can be levelled in turn at Bosworth himself in his own preface.

Nīshāpūrī's original work certainly became a major source for subsequent chronicles of this period and such histories as Rāwandī's *Rāḥat al-sudūr*, Mustawfī's *Tārīkh-i Guzīda*, the so-called *Risāla-i Juwaynī*, the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary, Abū 'l-Qāsim Kāshānī, and Afḍal al-Dīn Kirmānī, to name just a few, all rely on it for much of their material.

Ṣahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī wrote his history of the Seljuqs early in the reign of Ṭoḡhril III b. Arslan (1176–94), the ruler of Iraq, by which time the Great Seljuq sultans were great in name only. A tutor to Mas'ūd and Arslan, presumably but not certainly the sultans, Nīshāpūrī hoped through writing his chronicle to curry favour with Ṭoḡhril and restore his faded fortunes. Luther argues, not altogether convincingly, that in many ways, in the tradition

of Persian 'men of the pen', he was writing a 'mirror for princes' and trying to rekindle the teachings of Nizām al-Mulk in his royal audience. In Luther's view, he was a Persian traditionalist still coming to terms with Turkish ascendancy, with Iran under the rule of Turan. The power of the sultans had by this stage passed to their mamluks and atabegs, men, in the conservative view of Nishāpūrī, unworthy to rule given their status as slaves or sons of slaves. Even the Ghaznavids had been dismissed since, their 'king is the son of a slave' with 'no great lineage' and one whose 'kingdom will not remain with him'. (p. 33). Nishāpūrī believed in the divine right of kings and he wished that his king should reclaim his birthright from the mamluks and atabegs. Abū Ḥamīd Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, the continuator of his history until Ṭoḡhril's death in 1194, suggests that this was indeed the aim of the young sultan. 'The Sultan wanted to bring the affairs of the realm back to the principles of the past, as the rule of the sultans had been' (p. 156). The book was to be 'a book of counsel and a kind of political tract for royalty, as well as a source of historical information' (p. 12).

The text itself is short, clear and chronological. It does not differentiate between the eastern and western branches of the Seljuqs. However, its precise and simple content is sometimes obscured by a translation which unfortunately reflects too perfectly the imprecision of the original Persian. This is particularly noticeable in the confusing use of unattributable pronouns which can render some passages incomprehensible. Though Bosworth has corrected some of the 'infelicities of translation' others remain. Thus we have Sultan Barkyaruq 'wearing only an undershirt like water on your hand' (p. 71). The existence of other peculiarities such as 'that' followed by direct speech contained in quotation marks (pp. 117, 131, etc.) suggest that maybe Luther had not fully prepared the translation for publication.

The book opens with a brief account of the ancestry of the Seljuqs and then their migration from Turkestan into Transoxiana for reasons not fully supported elsewhere. The description of the family's early prosperity and strength also appears at variance with other sources (see C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 1963). God's humbling of the Ghaznavids for their sins and the Seljuqs' subsequent elevation is followed by accounts of the early sultans, anecdotal and historical, as well as comment on the rewards of justice and the losses incurred through heresy. Chapters are devoted to the reigns of the individual sultans, mixing historical records with anecdotal illustrations of inescapable divine will, with Alp Arslan whose 'arrows never went astray' (p. 47) failing to ward off his assassin's fatal blow (p. 54), and Nizām al-Mulk and Malik Shāh whose pen-box and crown were bound together and were twins, dying within a month of each other (p. 62), a coincidence inspiring the comment, 'See the power of God! Behold the weakness of the Sultan!' (p. 62). Accounts of the struggles against the evil and insidious power of the Assassins occur frequently. However, in the later chapters dealing with the Iraqi sultans and their viziers, a time and place closer to home, the accounts deal more with the actions and movements of the main players rather than reporting anecdotal incidents.

Luther's translation will be welcome to both students of Rashīd al-Dīn and students of medieval Persian history. Though not the original *Saljūq-nāma*, it still succeeds in opening up a major source of Seljuq history to a wider audience and provides life and colour to a period previously hidden for many behind secondary sources.

GEORGE LANE